



Suffolk User Forum
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SUF Chairs Update – January 2021

Dear SUF member,

After each SUF board of trustees' meeting I write to members to let you know what we discussed. Here is a summary from our January 2021 meeting which I hope you will find interesting.

Update on 'Healthy Together'

Last time I wrote, I told you about the work we are planning to support people with mental health problems to access their physical health care entitlements. We will be working with the physical health team at NSFT (Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust) who will refer people they know for extra support from SUF.

Many of the NSFT team have been supporting the Trust's COVID response and this means that the project may be slightly slower to get going than we hoped. We have decided to join *Equally Well UK* which is a national voluntary organisation that specialises in this type of work and so has lots of resources. You can read more about them here <https://equallywell.co.uk>. We will keep you posted about how the project develops in the coming weeks.

Proposed changes to the Mental Health Act (1983)

The Department of Health has launched a consultation on the Mental Health Act (1983) which will run until 23.04.21. The consultation document is very long but we're aware that many SUF members have experience of the Mental Health Act and may want to comment. Look on our website by clicking [HERE](#) for more an overview about the proposed changes and information about how to give your views.

Online event - different ways of looking at mental wellbeing

Over recent years, SUF has organised very popular free conferences on topics of interest to members. You may remember the *CrazyWise* film screening and discussion with the director which we organised. This was well attended, and the feedback was very positive. We will get back to holding conferences in person as soon as this is possible, but in the meantime, we are planning an online conference for later this year. The topic is going to be the 'Three Principles' approach which provides a spiritual and holistic way of thinking about mental health. We will let you know when we have dates arranged and how to book a place.

Service user feedback and the suicide prevention strategy

An important part of SUF's role is to gather service user feedback about services and present this to providers, commissioners and to organisations like Health Watch Suffolk and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Your feedback, positive and negative, is very important as it provides a reliable guide as to how services are doing. It also helps services to look at ways to improve. The CQC told us that they very much valued the feedback you provided when they assessed NSFT recently. So please do keep the feedback coming.

At this month's board we looked at your feedback on what happens when people feel suicidal. As you might expect there was a mixed picture with some people finding services very helpful. Sometimes the attitudes of staff can be very unhelpful though and this is an area that SUF has always pressed services to address. This report will feed into Suffolk's suicide prevention strategy and in fact will be the main source of service user experience information, so it is very important. Thank you if you contributed to this in any way.

Updating our charitable objectives

As a registered charity we update our objectives from time to time to make sure that they reflect what we do. So, over the last few months the board has reviewed our objectives. The proposed updated objectives do not change what we do in any way - they just provide a better description of our current work. You can read more about this on our website [HERE](#) and find out how you can comment on them.

To update our objectives, we will need permission from the Charity Commission, and we plan to seek their agreement over the spring. Once we get the green light from the Charity Commission, SUF members will vote on any changes before they take effect.

I hope you find this letter useful. As always, we would welcome your feedback. I will write again after our next trustees' board meeting which is in March 2021. In the meantime, I know how difficult this third lockdown is for many people, and I hope that next time I write we will all be better placed, as the vaccine rollout takes effect and we see the signs of spring.

Best wishes

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SUF Chair of Trustees